



Enhancing autonomous motivation of students should be an integral part of the educational philosophy of a medical school

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Dear Sir

I read your inspiring article “ten key features of the future medical school - not an impossible dream” with great interest and agree with your recommendations (Harden 2018).

If we want any educational reform to be successful, it should always happen at three hierarchical levels: the educational philosophy level, the curricular planning level, and the individual teacher level.

There is one key feature that I think is lacking in the “Ten features” story, which I think should be an integral part of the philosophy on which a curriculum is built. I would like to state that enhancing autonomous motivation of students should be an integral part of the educational philosophy of a medical school if we want to produce doctors of the future. This gap in the history of the development of medical curricula has been highlighted in an earlier review article (Kusurkar et al. 2012). Reforms in medical education have paid overwhelming attention to the cognitive and metacognitive components of learning, and ignored the motivational component. In the ten features, I see several elements (at the curricular planning level) that potentially enhance the autonomy, competence and relatedness of medical students. These should lead to enhancing autonomous motivation of both teachers and students according to self-determination theory of motivation. But I miss a specific acknowledgement of including this as a vision in every educational reform. Only when visionary medical educators like you include this in their writings, will this change actually happen. After a decade of conducting research on motivation in medical education, I strongly feel that every teacher, assessor, supervisor, curricular developer, policy maker, researcher, educational scholar, faculty developer, and educational management

member should have student and teacher motivation at the core of the educational philosophy of their medical school and the activities they perform in relation to learning.

Disclosure statement


The author declares no conflicts of interest. The author alone is responsible for the content and writing of this letter.

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